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## One to one coaching sessions

In KED schools, students are always at the center of everything we think about, plan for, and do. As a foundational part of that orientation, students receive a 1:1 coaching session each week for 15 minutes. This session is both reflective and forward-looking, and is structured and focused. During these sessions, the coach’s main tasks are to:

* help students structure their learning process by reviewing their goals, strategies and schedules for the upcoming week.
* help students develop a deeper and more reflective attitude towards learning by reflecting on and assessing the past week together with the students.
* help students become aware of their strengths and possible hindrances.
* help each student stay on task with their studies, adapting the coaching to meet each student’s maturity and needs.

Your attitude is the most significant tool in a professional talk like the coaching session. This is expressed through confidence, warmth and active listening.

### Preparing for the coaching session

The coach prepares for the one-to-one coaching session by looking back at the notes from the previous session and any other information that has come to him or her through subject or grade team meetings, etc.

The student has to come prepared for the coaching session by reflecting and planning in advance. The student’s logbook should therefore contain the following:

* reflections/assessment of the past week’s goals and strategies
* goals, strategies and schedules for the coming week

The student might need to take his or her current work material to the meeting in order to make the session more meaningful.

Students will not know all of this in the beginning. It takes time for them to learn the procedure. This is why it is important to review the tools of coaching during advisories, etc. give the students time for reflection/evaluation and planning there.

### Different phases of the 1:1 coaching session

Dividing the coaching session in phases, in which each phase has a particular purpose, is one way to create a clear structure for the meeting.

#### Introductory phase

The opening is important. Remember to show that you are interested in the student’s overall situation – not just his or her performance – and show it in words and in your body language. The coach sets the tone of the coaching session, which has to be engaging and inviting. Acknowledge the student by listening and showing that you are listening and trying to understand how the student thinks and feels, without being judgmental.

#### Reflection/evaluation of the past school week

Guiding questions:

* How have things been in general? How has the week been?
* Have you reached your goals – what did you learn?
* Did you apply your strategies – how did you learn?
* Which strategies worked/didn’t work?

The objective here is to check things and provide support but also to identify the strategies that work well. Over time, the student will hopefully assemble a portfolio of well-functioning strategies – personal learning strategies. Use the logbook as the basis for the tutorial, but mainly let the student choose to make his or her own comments and maybe reflect more deeply on a goal or a strategy. You should preferably ask questions to get the student to elaborate further, or pose challenging questions, such as:

* *“What are your thoughts on…?”*
* *“Did things go better before?”*
* *“How were things then, and what did you have that you miss now?”*
* *“What do you need?”*

Avoid “why” questions since they are often considered to create feelings of guilt and put the student on the defensive.

#### Goals for the coming week – looking ahead

Guiding question:

* What are your goals for the coming week – what are you going to learn?

In the beginning, most students need help from their coach to formulate their goals. When students become more confident and used to planning, they will instead inform the coach of their goals. These goals are what the students will learn and what the students need to do to reach their learning goals. Learning goals often run over a period of several weeks or even longer.

Then you should together discuss if the goals seem reasonable.

It is important that the student – initially with the help of the coach – also learns to plan long term. Successful students can particularly find this stimulating.

#### Strategies for the coming week – looking ahead

Guiding questions:

* How will you work to reach your knowledge goals?
* How will you use your time?

Working with learning strategies is a personal process and has to be tailored to each individual student and his/her particular strengths. Your job is to get the students to explore/experiment and become aware of the factors that affect their learning process, and consequently, their ability to reach goals.

As a personal coach and subject teacher, you help students proceed by trial and error and develop the strategies that best suit different situations involving different subjects. Recommend the student to use the strategies that work in a particular situation and test them in a situation where he/she is experiencing problems with their studies. Help the student discover and leverage his/her strengths, specifically to become aware of how/what he/she did when something was successful. Give the student tips about different techniques, such as mind-mapping, brainstorming, etc. (see below). Students can also get good help from their fellow students in the base group in order to get tips about strategies to try.

Encourage students to **experiment**, investigate and reflect over the factors that are important for them in the learning process. It is important that students start to propose their own strategies, on their own, and that the coach supports this process. Help students to get to know their abilities by proposing that they experiment and assess how their working methods function.

The students also need support and help from their subject teachers to develop strategies that are specific for each subject.

Thus, the heart of this work is to let students experiment and reflect on the factors that are important and the methods that function. There are no ready-made personal learning strategies. Students have to develop successful personal learning strategies from experience and reflection.

##### General questions about learning strategies which can be asked during coaching:

* *When did things go well this week? What did you do for them to go well?*
* *When you ran into a problem, how did you solve it and move on?*
* *In what type of situations do you learn things?*

##### Specific tips for questions about learning strategies that you can work with during one-to-one coaching sessions

What kind of environment do you want to work in? Try:

* *sitting in a quiet area by choosing a room with a quiet working environment and using ear plugs or listening to music (on headphones?) to cut yourself off from your surroundings*
* *sitting in a warm or cold room*
* *sitting in informal study places (such as the sofa or an armchair) or in formal study places (such as a desk)*

How do you want to learn and what type of assignments do you feel are best for you to work with, so you can learn? Try:

* *choosing assignments that you can read alone, mind-map what you read and study the text prior to a lecture*
* *attending many lectures and communication sessions to listen to the teacher, participate in discussions, seminars or cross-groups (?)*
* *selecting tasks with practical exercises so you can work with your hands or body while you learn*

What is the best way for you to work and learn as much as you want? Try:

* *sitting by yourself when you work, attending a workshop where you have access to teacher support, or sitting together with one or more friends, or changing your work partner*

How do you plan your work? Try:

* *sitting for a long time, without a break, to finish one task at a time, or working in short sessions and changing the subject frequently*
* *choosing a certain subject to work with early in the day, every day*

It is important for students to write down the strategies that will help them reach their goals in their logbooks.

#### Summarizing/evaluating the review

By summarizing the coaching session, the student and coach can get a common picture of the coaching session’s content. Examples of questions you can ask:

* *“How did you get help with your planning for the coming week?”*
* *“Have we talked about the right things? Is there anything you are thinking specifically of?”*
* *“Is there something we forgot?”*

Students should be given the opportunity to review the sessions few times per term. A scale of 1 to 10 can serve as a model for appraising the coaching session. Ask the student:

* *“On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate this coaching session?”*
* *“What do you and I need to do to give this review a higher rating [next time]?”*

To conclude, it is essential to remember that attitude is the most important tool in a professional discussion like a one-to-one coaching session. You have to be as realistic as possible to highlight the student’s abilities and potential, see solutions instead of problems, and give the student the hope that he or she will succeed.